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being interrupted by persons crowding on the stage, it is humbly hoped none will take it ill that they cannot be admitted behind the scenes in future." When "King John" was revived in 1745, there appeared a somewhat similar announcement, the reason alleged being that the play was so full of characters that company behind the scenes would be of great prejudice to the performance. A few years later appears another notice, "As the admission of persons behind the scenes has occasioned a general complaint on account of the frequent interruptions in the performance, 'tis hoped gentlemen won't be offended that no money will be taken there for the future."

Garrick, when he became manager, was much bent upon a thorough reform in this matter; but thorough reforms, as we all know, are not easy of accomplishment. The actors, in many cases would not venture upon the expense of taking benefits if they were to be deprived of the privilege of crowding their friends upon the stage. The building on the stage put sometimes as much as a hundred, or even a hundred and fifty pounds into the pocket of the "bénéficiaire." Then the young men of fashion, steady patrons of the drama, claimed the right to "go behind," not merely on benefit nights, but on all other occasions as well, and questioned the manager's power to control their wishes; while he, on his side, had some natural compunctions about offending such very constant supporters. It was not until the theater was enlarged in 1762, and the space before the curtain made to contain as many persons as formerly filled the boxes, pit, galleries and stage, that the actors were appeased, the excuse for going on the stage was removed, and the inconvenience and evil of the proceeding in a great degree suppressed. From that time only a very privileged few were admitted to the "arcana" of the playhouse.

The close contact into which the old custom of providing seats upon the stage brought the spectators and the players, occasionally gave rise to rather curious incidents. We read that Holland, the actor, fixed upon the tragedy of "Hamlet" for his first benefit. He was born at Chiswick, beyond Hammer-smith, then a very rural village indeed, and many of his friends and acquaintances journeyed to town to support their fellow-villager's histrionic efforts. When the night came, a simple country-girl found herself seated in the front row of the amphitheatre at the back of the stage. On the appearance of the ghost of the murdered king, young Hamlet's hat, in accordance with very venerable theatrical custom, was tossed from his head, and fell nearly at the feet of the damsel from Chiswick. Misunderstanding the situation, and very anxious to be of service to her friend Mr. Holland, the young woman quietly stole from her seat, took up the hat, and replaced it upon the actor's head. But a hat carelessly put on is apt to impart a look of dishevelment, sometimes even of inebriety, to the countenance beneath it, and it was recognized on the occasion under notice that Hamlet had somehow assumed the aspect of a drunken man. It says something for the ability of the actor, and the forbearance of the audience, that they were induced by the "cunning of the scene" to restrain the expression of their mirth until that portion of the performance had been brought to a close. But when Hamlet and the Ghost had fairly quitted the stage, the

house broke out, says the teller of the story, "into one of the loudest laughs I ever heard in a theatre."

In Foote's comedy of "The Englishman in Paris," first played in 1753, the hero, Buck, a vulgar coxcomb, is made to describe an adventure on the French stage in almost the following words:—"Dick Daylight, Bob Breadbasket, and I were walking through one of their 'rues,' I think they call them—they are 'streets' in London, but they have such out-of-the-way names for things that there is no remembering them—when we see crowds of people going into a house, and 'comedy' pasted over the door. In we trooped with the rest, paid our cash, and sat down on the stage. Presently they had a dance, and one of the young women, with long hair trailing, stood with her back to the rail just by me. What does me, for nothing in the world but a joke, but tie her locks to the rail; so that when it was her turn to figure out, down she flopped on her back! 'Twas vastly comical, but they set up such an uproar! One whey-faced fellow that came to loose the woman turned up his nose, and called me 'Bête.' But I lent him a smack on his lantern jaws that will make him remember the blood of old Marlborough, I warrant him. Another came up to second him, but I let drive, and laid him sprawling. Then in poured a million of them; I was knocked down in a trice; and what happened afterwards I know no more than you." Mr. Foote was, perhaps, the first satirist of the snob on his travels. The class of people, Buck being a type of them, who think it obligatory upon them to misconduct themselves immediately they set foot on a foreign shore, are almost extinct, but not quite.

Mrs. Bellamy, the actress, in her autobiography, narrates an adventure that befel her on the Dublin stage. She was performing Cleopatra to a crowded house, and amid tumultuous applause, when a gentleman who stood near the stage-door, took the liberty of demonstrating his approval after a very unjustifiable fashion. "Being a little flushed with liquor" (a condition in which it is to be feared the fine gentleman of the last century was frequently to be found), "or otherwise," says the lady, "I am persuaded he could not have been capable of the rudeness—he put his lips to the back of my neck as I passed him. Justly enraged," she continues, "at so great an insult, and not considering that the Lord Lieutenant was present, or that it was committed before such a number of spectators, I instantly turned about and gave the gentleman a slap in the face." This prompt punishment of the offender seems to have delighted the house. The Earl of Chesterfield, the Lord Lieutenant of the time, rose from his seat clapping his hands, and the whole audience followed his example. The tipsy gentleman was compelled to make a public apology, and a regulation was soon afterwards put in force prohibiting the admission behind the scenes of any not connected with the theatre.

It is a little curious to find Dr. Johnson a chief performer in a disturbance on the stage; but Garrick used to tell a story that when, in the younger days of himself and his friend at Lichfield, their native place, some strolling players came and performed at the theatre, Johnson took a chair and seated himself on the stage. Leaving his seat for a few minutes, he found it occupied on his return by a stranger, who refused to give it up, although formally requested so to

do. Thereupon Johnson, without further parley, took up chair and man together, and hurled them into the pit! Mrs. Thrale thought it worth while to inquire if the story was true. "Garrick has not spoiled it in the telling," said the doctor, quietly; "it is very near true, to be sure."

That Johnson was a man of athletic constitution, capable in his youth of putting forth great strength, there can be little question. As the bathing-man said in 1766 at Brighthelmstone, when he saw the doctor swimming and buffeting with the waves, "Why, sir, you must have been a stout-hearted gentleman forty years ago."—*Cassell's Magazine*.

ELECTRIC AUTOMATON PIANO.

The instrument to which this name has been given is a long wooden box, of the length and width of the keyboard of a pianoforte. It is so constructed that it can be easily and quickly fastened above the keyboard of any pianoforte by means of clamps. The box is provided with a crank, which sets in motion a magneto-electric apparatus contained within it. By introducing, in an aperture made for that purpose, the paper upon which the musical composition to be performed is written, or rather perforated, a series of axial bars protrude from underneath the box, and in striking the keys of the pianoforte, perform correctly the musical composition contained on the paper so introduced. The instrument can use these axial bars to strike the key-notes with four different degrees of strength—from the *pianissimo* to the *fortissimo*; it can gradually swell the sound when necessary, and afterward diminish in the same proportion; it can cause the axial bars to strike the key-notes either with a *legato* or *staccato* touch, and can produce *diminuendo* and *crescendo* passages, without the help of the pedals. Each instrument has a pedal attachment, which can be clamped to the piano. A wire connecting this attachment to the box situated above the keyboard, enables the instrument to use the loud or soft pedals as either is needed.

The instrument to which the name of Organautomaton has been given is similar to the Pianautomaton in its construction, and is governed by the same principles. The only difference being that one is constructed so as to play on the single keyboard of the pianoforte, and the other to perform on the three keyboards of church organs. The pedal attachment of the one is similar to that of the other, only it is longer, and has more pedals to act upon.

The patent of the inventor covers three different kinds of instruments: one which contains within it a magneto-electric apparatus, and which is worked by a crank; another provided with a galvanic battery, and also worked by a crank; and last, but not least, a self-acting instrument, which performs alone, without any winding up, or any visible or apparent aid. In inserting the perforated paper in the aperture of this last instrument, it pushes a small lever, which, coming in metallic contact, completes the electric circuit, and sets in motion a small electric machine, and the instrument thus *plays by itself*. When all the musical paper has passed through the aperture, the lever being no longer held up, falls down by its own weight, and the electrical current being

broken, the instrument stops of its own accord.

The most ingenious, as well as the important part of the invention, is the roll of sheet music containing the notes of the musical composition to be performed by the instrument. In fact, this roll of paper is the soul and motor of the instrument. The different combinations which can be devised on it, can be made to produce effects of execution on the piano or the organ which no living artist could think of attempting. For example, the instrument can be made, in this manner, to run a chromatic scale in octaves, thirds or tenths, from the lowest to the highest note of the keyboard, with a velocity which would cause the whole scale to sound like the snap of a whip, although every note shall have been heard distinctly and clearly. In the same manner the instrument can be made to produce the same effect as if four, six, eight, or more hands were performing. It will easily be understood, therefore, that the roll of sheet music for the instrument, is the most important feature of the invention, and that its preparation will, necessarily, create a new branch of industry; a consideration which, commercially speaking, renders the invention one of general public interest.

As most of the masses, oratorios, hymns, operas, dances, and all new compositions will be arranged on rolls of paper prepared for the instrument, the income to be derived from the sale of the music alone will be large. The process of preparing the paper rolls is so simple, that the perforation of a musical composition will cost less than engraving the notes on paper as is ordinarily done, and the oldest music, therefore, be supplied at a lower rate than the present publications; and the instrument itself is so simple in its construction, that its price will enable every owner of a piano to purchase it.

The advantages of the invention will be better understood when one thinks of the number of churches throughout the country whose congregations have not the means of sustaining an organist, and whose organ is consequently silent; of the quantity of pianofortes in our parlors which are dumb for want of a performer. This invention brings within the reach of the poorest church the facility of securing, for a trifling sum, the services of something more than a skillful organist, and to every parlor the possibility of continually possessing a most brilliant pianist.

The instrument will not be confined to a certain set of airs like the hand-organ, or to a limited repertoire, like the human artist, but will play, "at first sight," the most difficult pieces which may be procured, without any previous study, and without hesitation. To the student it will be a great help, inasmuch as it will perform correctly, and in the requisite movement, those musical compositions which they may desire to learn. To the singer it will be indispensable in efficiently accompanying any of their songs. For balls and parties, it may even be preferred to a living artist, on account of its mathematical correctness of time in performing quadrilles, polkas, and dances. For churches it will prove an economy, so far as the organist is concerned, and a great acquisition, on account of its inexhaustible repertoire of voluntaries, masses, oratorios, and hymns; also for its unerring efficiency in sustaining a choir.

To the public it will be a source of general enjoyment, and a means of popularizing the appreciation of fine music, as it will perform

any and every musical composition, with strict regard to all the shades, accents, signs, and movements marked by the composers, and not, as is now the case, according to the whims and fancies of the different performers. It will accustom the public ear to the correct execution of the different musical compositions, and will surely elevate the standard of musical criticism.

Taste can be reduced to certain rules: all ascending passages, from grave to acute, should be played *crescendo*; those descending, from acute to grave, should be played *diminuendo*; certain notes should be played louder, others softer. As the instrument is susceptible of four shades of *forte* and *piano*, can play *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, can use both pedals, and, especially, as the most delicious shades can be effectively regulated on the roll of perforated sheet music, it will easily be understood that "Trastour's Pian-automaton" will not perform like a hand-organ, a music-box, or other mechanical apparatus, but will play with taste and feeling, and effectually imitate a living artist.—*Home Journal*.

PIKE'S OPERA HOUSE.

The establishment is located on the west side of Eighth avenue, commencing at the corner of Twenty-third street, and occupying nearly half the block northerly. The frontage on Eighth avenue is 112 feet north from the corner of Twenty-third street, and the frontage on Twenty-third street is 120 feet west from the corner of the avenue. The ground plan is of irregular formation, the opera house being built between the two streets and not directly in rear of the corner building. The extreme depth, west from Eighth avenue, is 325 feet; giving a lot of ground in round figures of about 140 by 275, besides an additional lot on Twenty-fourth street of 79 feet front by 55 deep, running back to the westerly end of the north boundary of the principal lot, and making in the aggregate fully 47,500 superficial feet. The corner building is four stories high, and constructed entirely of marble, except the lower story, which is of ornamental iron work. The foundations are deep and broad, and the main walls are several feet thick and substantially secured. The exterior finish of this elegant marble structure is a combination of the Italian and Corinthian orders. Over the principal entrance on Eighth avenue rises a magnificent Corinthian portico, supporting two marble figures representing Music and Comedy. Above these, and standing out from the third story, are the statues of Shakespeare and Mozart in bas-relief, and surmounting all, at the summit of the edifice, stands an elegantly finished and splendidly executed group in marble, Apollo being the central figure, and Avidé and Erato appearing on either side. These features, added to the ordinary finish and beauty of the building, serve to render it exteriorally one of the finest in the city.

The interior of the building merits fully as minute a description as the exterior. The basement floor is a room 60 by 90 feet, and will be devoted to the purposes of a restaurant, and fitted up in a style suited to the ends which it is to subserve. Upon the first floor there are four stores, each seventy-five feet deep; two on either side of the grand entrance of Eighth avenue. On the second story and extending through to the fourth

story, there is a splendid hall, designed for musical and ball room purposes, occupying an area of 67 by 93 feet and 33 feet high, containing galleries and orchestra stand, the whole ornamented by columns, spandrels, and other devices of an elaborate and beautiful design. There will be two entrances to the grand hall, one on Eighth avenue and one on Twenty-third street, each twenty-three feet wide. Adjoining the hall on the second story is a large supper-room, and above it on the fourth floor, are rooms for lodge meetings, committee rooms, etc. This elegant edifice is eighty-five feet high, and is surmounted by an attractive and substantially built Mansard roof.

The Opera House is located between Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth streets, in the rear of the marble structure already described; but, of course, in nearly the centre of the block. It is situated sixty-eight feet from Twenty-third street and sixty-five feet from Twenty-fourth street, fronting toward Eighth avenue, but 111 feet from it. Its dimensions are:—185 feet deep by eighty feet wide, exclusive of the vestibule on the easterly and connecting with the corner building, which is forty by eighty feet. The auditorium, from floor to ceiling, is seventy feet high, and is divided into parquet, parquet circle, dress circle and family circle. The building will accommodate fully 2,000 people. In addition to the seats already mentioned there are twenty-seven boxes in the dress circle, which will accommodate four persons each, and six proscenium boxes, roomy and elegant, sixteen feet wide, twelve feet deep and ten feet high. The decorations of the Opera House are magnificent. The style is somewhat capricious and varied, but more nearly resembles the Elizabethan than any other order. The aim has been evidently to harmonize everything, color, ornament and style, so that the effect would be both striking and satisfactory. The walls are plastered and panelled in oil, mostly of light tint in bas relief. The second tier is ornamented with small cupids and musical devices and the third tier with raised wreaths of flowers in gilt. The pillars supporting the tiers are also handsomely ornamented with raised circling wreaths of leaves. The dress circle boxes are in white and gold, raised panels with real ornaments. The proscenium is correspondingly ornamented with pillars of sciolia, in imitation of porphyry, and are draped with curtains of white and blue. The decorations of the proscenium are very elegant and elaborate, the flat surface being covered with rich and pleasing designs, and the whole surmounted with massive trusses having gilded ornamentations of exquisite design and execution. The ceiling is covered with substantial canvas, and upon a blue ground encircling the cupola or dome are nine figures representing the nine muses in tinted colors and executed with great artistic taste and skill by Mr. F. Auger. The remainder of the ceiling is covered with beautiful and appropriate designs, all of which enhance the general effect and harmony of the interior. One of the most striking features of the Opera House is the dome, which surmounts the centre of the auditorium, and which, through beautifully stained windows, admits sufficient daylight to fill all parts of the building. This dome is thirty feet in diameter and contains an inner gallery in which are placed eight figures in statuesque, made of papier-mache in imitation of marble and corresponding in position with the muses up-